United Nations A/70/228

General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 July 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Item 20 (h) of the provisional agenda*
Sustainable development: United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

Review of the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report prepared by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 65/163 and 69/211.

* A/70/150.

15-13023 (E) 240815

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Review of the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Summary

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) was proclaimed by the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, in 2002. The Decade ended on 31 December 2014.

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 65/163 and 69/211, the present document provides a review of the implementation of the Decade and an account of the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development organized in 2014 in Japan. The document is based on consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, including Governments, civil society organizations and United Nations agencies.

I. Introduction

A. Background

1. By its resolution 57/254 of 20 December 2002, the General Assembly proclaimed the 10-year period beginning on 1 January 2005 the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and designated the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the lead agency for the promotion of the Decade. The goal of the Decade was "to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning" in order to "create a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations".[1]

2. The proclamation of the Decade was recommended by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, which took stock of progress in sustainable development 10 years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.[2] The Decade was the result of the recognition by the global community that education is crucial to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development is not achieved through political decisions, technological advances or fiscal instruments alone; sustainable development requires a major shift in mindsets and actions that only education at all levels and in all forms is able to bring about. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development[3] already acknowledged the importance of education to the pursuit of sustainable development.

3. Responsibility for implementing the Decade lay with a wide range of stakeholders at global, regional, national and subnational levels, including Governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, educational institutions, educators and individuals. In its resolution 58/219, the General Assembly invited Governments to promote public awareness of and wider participation in the Decade, including through cooperation and initiatives engaging civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

B. Outline of this report

4. The present report is prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/163, in which the Assembly requested UNESCO to present a review of the implementation of the Decade to it at its seventieth session. The document presents key findings of the final report on the Decade, *Shaping the Future We Want*,

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[1] UNESCO, *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014): International Implementation Scheme* (Paris, 2005), sect. II.A. Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001486/148654e.pdf.

[2] See *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex, para. 124.

[3] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

prepared by UNESCO after undertaking an extensive review of the Decade.[4] The document also provides information on the United Nations contribution to the Decade and addresses ways forward for education for sustainable development after the end of the Decade. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/211, information on the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from 10 to 12 November 2014, is included in the report.

5. UNESCO conducted the review of the Decade, on which the main findings and conclusions of the present document are based, through extensive data collection and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders. The Decade review process had the following components:

(a) Regional multi-stakeholder consultations organized by UNESCO in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America and Latin America and the Caribbean;

(b) Responses to questionnaire sent to Governments, United Nations agencies and a broad range of other stakeholders that provided information for the final assessment of the Decade as well as suggestions on the way forward for education for sustainable development after the end of the Decade. A total of 1,159 responses were received;

(c) Peer-reviewed research that UNESCO commissioned for various aspects of the assessment of the Decade, including the contribution of UNESCO and other United Nations agencies to the Decade. In various cases, this research included semi-structured interviews with key experts and stakeholders such as members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

II. Key findings from the review of the Decade

A. Trends

6. The review of the Decade conducted by UNESCO concludes that a solid foundation has been laid for education for sustainable development at the end of the Decade, achieved by raising awareness, influencing policies and generating significant numbers of good practice projects in all areas of education and learning. Accomplishments over the Decade can be seen in a variety of forms, most notably, the increased visibility of education for sustainable development in national policies and international agreements. In many countries, Governments are integrating education for sustainable development into education to prepare their citizens to address the sustainability challenges that lie ahead. Meanwhile, individuals, schools, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector have all joined in the challenge to advance learning towards a broader and deeper understanding and practice of sustainability.

[4] UNESCO, *Shaping the Future We Want: UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014): Final Report* (Paris, 2014), and *Shaping the Future We Want: UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014): Final Report: Summary* (Paris, 2014). Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002301/230171e.pdf and http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002303/230302e.pdf, respectively.

A growing number of higher education institutions are directing their teaching and research towards sustainability solutions. Businesses now recognize the value of having a knowledgeable and skilled workforce that can contribute to developing greener economies. Investments are being made in both policy and practice to strengthen the capacities of people of all ages and from all walks of life. The review of the Decade identifies in particular the following trends after 10 years of action in education for sustainable development.

Education systems are addressing sustainability issues

7. Across many countries, a strong trend can now be seen to make education more relevant to current and future social, environmental and economic challenges. Education for sustainable development provides a renewed vision and purpose for education policy and practice. Evidence at the end of the Decade suggests that the process of reorienting education policies, curricula and plans towards sustainable development in most reporting Member States is well under way, although progress remains uneven.

8. There has been a clear increase in the understanding that education for sustainable development is a lifelong learning process that begins in early childhood and advances throughout primary and secondary education, technical and vocational education and training, higher education, workplace training and professional development, and includes public awareness efforts. Quality education is now increasingly understood to go beyond the provision of basic skills such as literacy and numeracy to include the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that underpin sustainability. There is broad consensus that quality education today must prepare people to address the specific challenges the world is facing and help them to transform societies so they become more sustainable. A fuller view of quality education now encompasses the purpose of education, as well as the methods and content of education.

Sustainable development agendas and education agendas are converging

9. Stakeholders from sustainable development sectors are increasingly adapting education, training and public awareness efforts to advance sustainable development. Education is figuring prominently in international debates on sustainable development, and greater attention is now being paid to education as an essential mechanism to support the implementation of major environmental conventions and agreements. Accordingly, the importance of education for sustainable development was emphasized in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.[5]

10. At the national level, several countries have incorporated education strategies, tools and targets into national sustainable development strategies, climate change plans and related frameworks. Activities in many countries to build greener economies are being aligned with relevant skills development and training. Many stakeholders emphasize the need to strengthen coordination between government agencies responsible for sustainable development policy and planning and those responsible for education to advance towards national sustainable development objectives.

[5] "The future we want", General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

Political leadership has proven instrumental

11. Political leadership backed up by resources has helped to create the organizational environment necessary for the advancement of education for sustainable development, including better national and subnational coordination of implementation. Important progress has been made in putting national strategies or plans in place, contributing to the integration of education for sustainable development into national education and sustainable development policies.

12. Countries have adopted a variety of approaches to reorienting education systems, from creating a strong basis for education for sustainable development by embedding it in national legislation, policies and standards, through to more decentralized approaches based on pilot projects involving multiple stakeholders. Depending on their specific administrative structure and their needs, countries have opted for top-down, bottom-up or blended approaches. Many stakeholders have found that capacity development for policymakers is essential for advancing change. Strengthening the capacity of administrators, teachers and trainers is equally regarded as important.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are particularly effective

13. The Decade has helped to reinforce partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders. Knowledge exchange and collaboration at the international level supported the inclusion of education for sustainable development in the proposed post-2015 agenda. Mechanisms such as national coordinating bodies helped to shape policy at the country level and support implementation as well as research. Interactions among the growing networks of universities supporting education for sustainable development in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere have led to international commitments by higher education institutions and peer support for implementation. Networking of schools has connected students across the globe to jointly learn about sustainable development challenges and the solutions sought in the students' respective communities. Partnerships involving civil society organizations and the private sector have also been crucial in building capacity in many countries.

14. Partnerships and networks have existed for many years as mechanisms to advance work in climate change, biodiversity, water, poverty eradication, sustainable consumption and production and other major challenges facing the world today. There is a growing capacity now in the education sector to work in alignment and collaboration with these long-standing sustainable development partnerships and networks.

Local commitments are growing

15. The implementation of education for sustainable development now includes unique features that relate to the local context. For example, in formal education, community engagement helps young children and students to learn about local issues. Public awareness-raising efforts have reinforced work at local levels to increase citizens' knowledge and participation in local solutions. Similarly, the private sector's need for an educated, skilled workforce to support green and sustainable enterprises at the local level has influenced technical and vocational education and training as well as capacity-building.

16. Lessons from the Decade suggest that increased engagement with organizations that focus specifically on local-level sustainable development planning and action — such as local non-governmental organizations, networks of cities and municipalities, and rural development networks — can provide additional leverage for education for sustainable development at the local level.

Whole-institution approaches have become more widespread

17. Whole-institution approaches entail mainstreaming sustainability into all aspects of the learning environment. These approaches include embedding sustainability in curriculum and learning processes, facilities and operations, interaction with the surrounding community, governance and capacity-building. Such approaches have significantly increased during the Decade and are helping learners to contribute to sustainable development in their schools or institutions, communities and workplaces. In a move towards long-term efforts to address the social, economic and environmental footprint in their communities, schools are engaging students in the process of reducing and managing that footprint.

18. Institutions of higher education have also made significant commitments to whole-institution changes, from sustainability in operations and management to changes in teaching, curriculum and research, as well as strengthening sustainable development in their surrounding communities.

Education for sustainable development facilitates interactive, learner-driven pedagogies

19. Education for sustainable development is advancing teaching and learning approaches that help learners to ask questions, analyse, think critically and make decisions in collaboration with others. Participatory learning processes, critical thinking and problem-based learning are proving particularly conducive to education for sustainable development. Although more evidence is needed, research is beginning to suggest that students who learn through these methods, together with acquiring the content relevant for sustainability, develop greater awareness of and responsibility for the world around them. Educators at all levels are central to this process.

Education for sustainable development is being integrated into formal education

20. There is a growing recognition among policymakers that early childhood care and education is the foundation of sustainable development. There is also an increased understanding among education practitioners that children can be agents of change within their families and communities. In primary and secondary education, evidence of increasing policy attention to, and integration of, education for sustainable development is especially strong. Governments report advances in education for sustainable development at the primary and secondary levels to be among their greatest achievements during the Decade. Reviews of curriculum documents have found that many countries now include sustainability and/or environmental themes as one of the general goals of education. At the same time, efforts to prepare teachers to deliver education for sustainable development have not advanced to the same extent. More work is still needed to reorient teacher education to address education for sustainable development content and learning methods.

21. The Decade has also seen higher education stepping up its efforts towards sustainable development. There are many instances of new specialist courses in sustainability, institution-wide reorientations of the curriculum, innovations in teaching and learning processes and growth of sustainability-related research. However, many of the advances have been achieved through pilot projects or committed individuals. The systemic transformation of higher education towards sustainable development has yet to occur.

Non-formal and informal education for sustainable development is increasing

22. In the daily lives of communities, families and individuals, awareness of environmental and sustainable development issues is reported to have increased in many countries. Much of this appears to be due to a growth in non-formal and informal approaches to education for sustainable development. Social media, though still underused by stakeholders, are considered to have great potential for the advancement of sustainability-related awareness and actions.

23. Major gains have been made through education and training to strengthen the private-sector response to sustainable development. Large businesses and multinational companies now have an increased awareness of sustainability, acquired through peer learning at conferences, workshops or business association events and through executive education programmes. In many cases, education, training and awareness-raising efforts are leading to the adoption of sustainability as a business strategy.

Technical and vocational education and training advances sustainable development

24. Policy and planning in both sustainable development and technical and vocational education and training are now aligning in the green economy and green skills agendas, leading to new research and capacity-building efforts. As a result of international attention and increased consumer demand for greener products and services, national technical and vocational education and training systems are beginning to recognize the need to support greener economic development. Private-sector demands for skilled workers in greening traditional industries and new green business are also influencing the reorientation of education and training systems.

B. Challenges

25. Despite the successes achieved during the Decade, Member States Governments and other stakeholders indicate that considerable challenges remain in realizing the full potential of education for sustainable development. These include the following in particular.

26. *Further alignment of education and sustainable development sectors*. While there has been progress regarding the alignment of education and sustainable development agendas, the linkages are still weak in many countries. Insufficient integration of education for sustainable development into national development policies and plans, together with weak inter-ministerial coordination, were considered by many Member States to be ongoing barriers to education for sustainable development implementation. Inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination will need to be increased significantly to ensure that education

supports sustainable development objectives, and that policymakers provide the necessary support for education.

27. *More effort towards institutionalizing education for sustainable development.* The majority of Member States have reported that education for sustainable development is making solid progress, but few have reported full implementation of across education systems. The move from creating an enabling environment to actual changes in curriculum and education practice has been slow in most areas of education. Systemic change will require institutionalization of education for sustainable development, including the provision of financial resources, that will make implementation less dependent on individual leaders and champions. In this context, increased capacity-building for policymakers, education leaders and practitioners is regarded by many stakeholders as critical to driving education for sustainable development forward.

28. *Improving monitoring and evaluation.* To date, there has been limited use of monitoring tools to assess the quality and effectiveness of education for sustainable development programmes, the extent of their implementation and the learning outcomes they generate. Many stakeholders support strengthening research, innovation and monitoring and evaluation to better understand the effectiveness of good practices and how to scale them up.

III. The United Nations contribution to the Decade

A. Coordination and implementation

29. United Nations coordination during the Decade was ensured through the Inter-Agency Committee for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. As the lead agency for the Decade, UNESCO served as the convener and secretariat of the Committee, with the chair rotating on an annual basis. The membership of the Committee grew from 15 in 2005 to 22 at the end of the Decade. The Committee served as a locus for exchanging information on education for sustainable development activities, sharing good practices, consulting on strategies for implementation and undertaking joint advocacy efforts to highlight the importance of education for sustainable development at the global level. The Committee also supported and catalysed joint implementation efforts by its members.

30. An example for common strategizing and advocacy in support of education for sustainable development was the joint input the 22 member agencies of the Committee provided for the zero draft of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. The Conference also saw the launch of a joint United Nations initiative in support of education for sustainable development that was partly catalysed by the Committee. The Higher Education for Sustainability Initiative called upon higher education institutions to sign a declaration committing them to teach sustainable development across all disciplines of study, encourage research and dissemination of sustainable development knowledge, green campuses and support local sustainability efforts, and engage and share information with international networks. With nearly 300 universities signing the declaration, the Initiative accounted for more than one third of all the voluntary commitments that came out of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

31. In addition to the Inter-Agency Committee, other coordination mechanisms dedicated to specific issues supported United Nations coordination for the Decade. These included the United Nations Alliance on Climate Change Education, Training and Public Awareness, the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector, and the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, a global framework for action adopted by the international community at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

32. Members of the Inter-Agency Committee also undertook their own substantial programme implementation activities in support of the Decade, so that the response to the Decade covered the whole United Nations system. Some examples of individual agencies' activities, most of which continue beyond the Decade, include the following.

33. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) supports the mainstreaming of environment and sustainability practices into universities through its Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability. Over 560 universities from across the world are currently part of this growing network. UNEP also undertook substantial activities to promote sustainable consumption through education and hosts the secretariat of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. As part of the Framework, a programme on sustainable lifestyles and education was launched at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in 2014. UNEP also coordinated the development of the Africa Environmental Education and Training Action Plan 2015-2024.

34. UNICEF promotes the inclusion of climate change and environmental education in schools as part of a major effort to roll out the child-friendly schools model. UNICEF developed materials, raised awareness and undertook capacity-building to this effect.

35. The United Nations University (UNU) promotes multi-stakeholder cooperation at the local level and a global community of practice through the network of regional centres of expertise for education for sustainable development. The regional centres of expertise are networks of existing formal, non-formal and informal organizations that facilitate learning towards sustainable development in local communities. 129 regional centres of expertise across the world were accredited by UNU at the end of the Decade. UNU also coordinates the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net), linking its work with the regional centres of expertise.

36. The Challenge Badge series of the Youth and United Nations Global Alliance hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations promotes knowledge and action regarding specific sustainable development challenges and fosters competencies like critical thinking and taking collective decisions through formal and non-formal education activities. Aimed at children and youth, the Challenge Badges have been taken up by a number of organizations, including the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and the World Organization of the Scout Movement, which have a collective membership of over 40 million individuals.

37. Examples of joint programme implementation activities catalysed by the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development include the technical support on disaster risk reduction provided by UNESCO and UNICEF. The two agencies jointly reviewed curricula in 30 countries, developed a technical guidance document that supports the integration of disaster risk reduction into school curricula and supported capacity-building at country level.

38. The One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership, a collaborative initiative involving over 30 multilateral organizations, supports action on climate change education and learning at all levels, including for children, youth and adults, through a One United Nations approach. The Partnership works both globally, promoting knowledge-sharing and providing free access to a wide range of resources, and nationally, collaborating with Governments, United Nations country teams and education and training institutions. The secretariat for the Partnership is provided by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

39. The joint UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange initiative, which was created in 2001, was scaled up during the Decade. The initiative promotes sustainable lifestyles among youth aged 15 to 24 through education, capacity-building, awareness-raising and dialogue. Active in more than 50 countries worldwide, the initiative develops and disseminates education materials in a youth-friendly format to promote the adoption of more sustainable consumer choices.

40. In their contributions to the review of the Decade, Inter-Agency Committee members indicated that the Decade provided an important framework for global cooperation, strengthened a One United Nations approach to education for sustainable development and helped to mobilize stakeholders beyond the United Nations. Members also reported that that the Decade led to a strengthening of education for sustainable development in the programmes of their agencies. While at the beginning of the Decade a majority of agencies reported that education for sustainable development was rarely included in their policies and programmes, at the end of the Decade most agencies consider its integration to be well under way within their organizations and the United Nations system as a whole. Continued and increased leadership by UNESCO and across all United Nations agencies will be needed to further align agendas, scale up action and mobilize resources. Attention to these issues will also contribute to strengthening the role of United Nations agencies as partners in multi-stakeholder arrangements.

B. The role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

41. General Assembly resolution 57/254 designated UNESCO as lead agency for the promotion of the Decade. UNESCO provided strategic leadership for the coordination and implementation of the Decade and undertook its own implementation activities in support of the Decade.

42. As a global leader, UNESCO developed the International Implementation Scheme for the Decade at the beginning of the Decade. Prepared through a broad multi-stakeholder consultative process and adopted by the UNESCO Executive Board in 2005, the International Implementation Scheme spelled out the vision, goals and objectives of the Decade, presented strategies for effective

implementation and suggested which stakeholders to involve at the global, regional, national and subnational levels. In 2010, UNESCO prepared the strategy for the second half of the Decade,[6] which spelled out key challenges and opportunities for the period from 2010 to 2014 and suggested key areas of strategic action.

43. UNESCO organized two world conferences on education for sustainable development during the Decade. The 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, organized with the Government of Germany and held in Bonn, reviewed the implementation of the Decade from 2005 to 2009 and adopted the Bonn Declaration,[7] which provided guidance and support for education for sustainable development during the second half of the Decade. The 2014 UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, organized with the Government of Japan and held in Aichi-Nagoya, reviewed the implementation of the Decade, adopted the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on and launched the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (see sect. IV below).

44. As part of its responsibilities as lead agency, UNESCO reported on the implementation of the Decade. It prepared a monitoring and evaluation framework at the beginning of the Decade and produced a mid-term report in 2009, *Review of Contexts and Structures for Education for Sustainable Development*, a report in 2012, *Shaping the Education of Tomorrow*, launched at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and the final report in 2014, *Shaping the Future We Want: UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development*.[8] UNESCO also regularly reported to its member States on the implementation of the Decade through its statutory reporting mechanisms. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/237, UNESCO prepared a mid-term review of the implementation of the Decade for submission to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session in 2010 (A/65/279).

45. Throughout the Decade, UNESCO served as an advocate for education for sustainable development in relevant global forums and processes. Among others, it helped ensure the visibility of education for sustainable development at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 and provided input on education for sustainable development into the development of the post-2015 agenda. Furthermore, UNESCO supported networks related to education for sustainable development and ensured the identification and dissemination of good practice through a variety of publications and its website. In its work as lead agency, UNESCO was supported by a number of expert advisory groups such as a Decade reference group, a monitoring and evaluation expert group and advisory groups for the preparation of the two world conferences.

46. UNESCO also undertook its own substantial implementation activities for the Decade. Among other activities, it provided technical support to countries to integrate climate change, disaster risk reduction and biodiversity into education policy and practice, providing policy advice and teaching and learning materials. UNESCO also ensured that its various networks address education for sustainable

[6] Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002154/215466e.pdf.
[7] Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001887/188799e.pdf.
[8] Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001849/184944e.pdf, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002166/216606e.pdf and http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002301/230171e.pdf, respectively.

development, in particular the Associated Schools Project Network, with its over 10,000 educational institutions across the world, the UNESCO Network of Chairs and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. During the Decade, UNESCO created a new education institute which supports education for sustainable development, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development in India.

IV. The 2014 World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

47. The UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development took place from 10 to 12 November 2014 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. Co-organized by UNESCO and the Government of Japan, the World Conference had the following objectives: celebrating a decade of action ("What have we achieved, what are the lessons learned?"); reorienting education to build a better future for all ("How does education for sustainable development reinforce quality education?"); accelerating action for sustainable development ("How are sustainability challenges addressed through education for sustainable development ?"); and setting the agenda for education for sustainable development beyond 2014 ("What are the strategies for our common future?"). The World Conference was preceded by associated stakeholder meetings in Okayama, Japan, bringing together students and teachers of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, young education for sustainable development leaders, and representatives of the UNU-coordinated network of regional centres of expertise for education for sustainable development. The stakeholder meetings provided input into the World Conference.

48. The World Conference was attended by over 1,100 participants from 150 UNESCO member States and associate member States. These included 76 participants at ministerial level, 122 official member State delegations, non-governmental organizations, academia, the private sector, individual experts and practitioners, media, youth and United Nations agencies. Over 60 key stakeholders were entrusted with the responsibility of organizing the concurrent workshops of the World Conference. This approach helped to build and strengthen partnerships that are proving instrumental for the implementation of the conference follow-up.

49. The key outcome of the World Conference was the launch of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development, the follow-up to the Decade (see section V.A below). In the lead-up to the Conference, UNESCO called upon Member States and other stakeholders to submit concrete launch commitments to the Global Action Programme, detailing their planned implementation actions. In total, 360 launch commitments from all regions were received. They provide a solid basis for the implementation of the Global Action Programme. The World Conference also launched the final report on the Decade (see para. 44 above) and announced the UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development (see https://en.unesco.org/prize-esd), which will be awarded annually by UNESCO for an initial period of five years.

50. The World Conference closed with the adoption of the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, the text of which is annexed to the present report. The Declaration celebrates the significant achievements made

by the Decade, reaffirms education for sustainable development as a vital means of implementation for sustainable development as recognized in various international frameworks, welcomes the growing international recognition of education for sustainable development as an integral and transformative element of inclusive quality education and lifelong learning, and stresses that education for sustainable development is an opportunity and a responsibility that should engage both developed and developing countries.

51. The Aichi-Nagoya Declaration invites Governments of UNESCO member States to make further efforts to review the purposes and values that underpin education; assess the extent to which education policy and curricula are achieving the goals of education for sustainable development; and reinforce the integration of education for sustainable development into education, training and sustainable development policies. The Declaration invites Governments to allocate and mobilize substantial resources to translate policies into actions, and reflect and strengthen education for sustainable development in the post-2015 agenda.

52. The Aichi-Nagoya Declaration requests the Director-General of UNESCO to continue to provide global leadership, support policy synergy and facilitate communication for education for sustainable development, in cooperation with relevant partners; harness partnerships and mobilize networks; and advocate the importance of ensuring adequate resources for education for sustainable development.

53. The outcomes of the World Conference were taken forward to the World Education Forum, organized by UNESCO and co-conveners from 19 to 22 May 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, to discuss and agree on the implementation of the post-2015 global education agenda.

V. Ways forward

A. The Global Action Programme and the post-2015 agenda

54. At its thirty-seventh session, the General Conference of UNESCO in 2013 endorsed the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development as the follow-up to the Decade. UNESCO developed the Global Action Programme through broad consultations with Governments and other stakeholders and in response to the commitment of Member States at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development "to promote education for sustainable development and to integrate sustainable development more actively into education beyond the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, para. 233. In its resolution 69/211, the General Assembly took note of the Global Action Programme as a follow-up to the Decade, invited Governments to take steps to implement it and invited UNESCO, as the lead agency for education for sustainable development, to continue to provide coordination for the implementation of the Global Action Programme, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

55. The overall goal of the Global Action Programme is to generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development. This involves both integrating sustainable

development into education and integrating education into sustainable development. Corresponding to this overall approach, two objectives are laid out:

(a) To reorient education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development;

(b) To strengthen education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development.

56. To enable strategic focus and foster stakeholder commitment, the Global Action Programme has identified five priority action areas to advance the education for sustainable development agenda:

(a) Advancing policy: Mainstream education for sustainable development into both education and sustainable development policies, to create an enabling environment for education for sustainable development and to bring about systemic change;

(b) Transforming learning and training environments: Integrate sustainability principles into education and training settings through whole-institution approaches;

(c) Building capacities of educators and trainers: Increase the capacities of educators and trainers to more effectively deliver education for sustainable development and become learning facilitators;

(d) Empowering and mobilizing youth: Multiply education for sustainable development actions among youth and support youth in their role as change agents for sustainable development;

(e) Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level: At community level, scale up education for sustainable development programmes and multi-stakeholder networks.

57. The Global Action Programme comes with a detailed implantation road map developed by UNESCO.[9] It is intended for all stakeholders, including Governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, media, the academic and research community, intergovernmental organizations and other relevant institutions that facilitate and support learning and training, and individual teachers and learners. The road map explains the goal, objectives and priority action areas of the Global Action Programme, together with implementation and monitoring strategies.

58. The road map describes four strategies at the global level to facilitate the implementation of the Global Action Programme:

(a) Building new momentum: All stakeholders were invited to make initial voluntary commitments to implement activities for the Global Action Programme. These launch commitments helped to kick-start implementation;

(b) Harnessing partnerships: Partner networks set up by UNESCO spearhead the implementation of the Global Action Programme. Partner networks consist of major stakeholders who have extensive outreach capacity, can create major impact

[9] UNESCO, *Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development* (Paris, 2014). Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230514e.pdf.

and/or conduct innovative activities. Members of partner networks are selected on the basis of the launch commitments received by UNESCO;

(c) Fostering a global community of practice: A global forum will give stakeholders the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas, experience and information. An online clearinghouse is being established for stakeholders to map information and knowledge, identify gaps, develop joint initiatives, raise funds and build capacities;

(d) Showcasing good practice: Innovative and effective initiatives, practices, approaches and processes that support the implementation of the Global Action Programme will be identified, provided visibility and shared widely for scaling up. The UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development has been launched to award and highlight good practices.

59. The four implementation strategies established at the global level can also be adapted at national level to spur national initiatives. The establishment of national coordination mechanisms or, as appropriate, the continuation of successful mechanisms that were put in place under the Decade, is encouraged.

60. The Global Action Programme is intended as a concrete contribution to the implementation of the post-2015 agenda. In the proposals for the post-2015 agenda, education for sustainable development has been fully recognized as an important element. The proposed sustainable development goal 4 on education contains education for sustainable development as part of target 4.7. Education and public awareness efforts are also recognized as an important means to implement the proposed sustainable development goals on climate change and sustainable consumption and production patterns (see A/68/970). Furthermore, education is recognized as an important means to enhance the resilience of communities in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 (see General Assembly resolution 69/283).

61. The Incheon Declaration, adopted at the World Education Forum (see para. 53 above), recognized the importance of education for sustainable development, together with global citizenship education and human rights education, as an important element of quality education. The Declaration expressed strong support for the implementation of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.[10] The Education 2030 Framework for Action, whose essential elements were adopted at the World Education Forum, includes guidance for the implementation of education for sustainable development. The recognition of education for sustainable development as an integral part of the post-2015 agenda provides a strong mandate for the continuation and scaling up of related activities after the end of the Decade.

B. Recommendations

62. The review of the Decade leads to the following recommendations for future action on education for sustainable development.

[10] *Incheon Declaration: Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all* (2015). Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002338/233813M.pdf.

63. Member States and other concerned stakeholders should scale up education for sustainable development action by implementing the Global Action Programme in its five priority action areas: policy, learning environments, educators, youth and local communities.

64. Education and sustainable development agendas at global, regional, national and subnational levels should be further aligned, and multi-stakeholder partnerships bringing together stakeholders from the education sector and from other sectors concerned with sustainable development should be strengthened and expanded. This includes using education for sustainable development as a means of implementation across all sustainable development goals.

65. Education for sustainable development should be systemically integrated and fully institutionalized in the education sector and other relevant sectors in Member States. This requires the inclusion of education for sustainable development in relevant policies and developing the capacities of policymakers, institutional leaders and educators. It also requires strengthening research, innovation and monitoring and evaluation to support the scaling up of good practice.

Annex

Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development

We, the participants of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from 10 to 12 November 2014, adopt this Declaration and call for urgent action to further strengthen and scale up education for sustainable development, in order to enable current generations to meet their needs while allowing future generations to meet their own, with a balanced and integrated approach regarding the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. This Declaration recognizes that people are at the centre of sustainable development and builds on the achievements of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014); the deliberations of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Aichi-Nagoya; and the stakeholder meetings held in Okayama, Japan, from 4 to 8 November 2014, namely, events of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Youth Conference, the global regional centres of expertise conference and other relevant events and consultation processes, including regional ministerial meetings. We express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Japan for hosting the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development.

1. *Celebrating* the significant achievements made by the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), in particular, in putting education for sustainable development higher on national and international agendas, advancing policy, improving the conceptual understanding of education for sustainable development and generating substantive good practice amongst a wide range of stakeholders,

2. *Expressing* our appreciation to many Governments, United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations, all types of educational institutions and setups, educators and learners in schools, communities and workplaces, youth, the scientific community, academia and other stakeholders who have actively committed to and participated in the implementation of the Decade, and to UNESCO for the leadership role it has played as lead agency of the Decade,

3. *Recalling* the international commitment to further promoting education for sustainable development that was included in the outcome document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want",

4. *Noting* that the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development, endorsed by the General Conference of UNESCO at its thirty-seventh session as a follow-up to the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and a concrete contribution to the post-2015 agenda, aims at generating and scaling up education for sustainable development actions in all levels and areas of education, training and learning,

5. *Reaffirming* education for sustainable development as a vital means of implementation for sustainable development, as recognized in intergovernmental agreements on climate change (article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Doha Work Programme), biodiversity (article 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its work programmes and related decisions), disaster risk reduction (Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-

2015), sustainable consumption and production (sustainable lifestyles and education programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns), and children's rights (articles 24[2], 28 and 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child), among many others,

6. *Welcoming* the growing international recognition of education for sustainable development as an integral and transformative element of inclusive quality education and lifelong learning and an enabler for sustainable development, as demonstrated by the inclusion of education for sustainable development as a target in the Muscat Agreement adopted at the 2014 Global Education For All Meeting and in the proposal for sustainable development goals by the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals,

7. *Recognizing* the establishment of the UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development approved by the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 195th session,

We, the participants,

8. *Emphasize* the potential of education for sustainable development to empower learners to transform themselves and the society they live in by developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, competences and values required for addressing global citizenship and local contextual challenges of the present and the future, such as critical and systemic thinking, analytical problem-solving, creativity, working collaboratively and making decisions in the face of uncertainty, and understanding of the interconnectedness of global challenges and responsibilities emanating from such awareness,

9. *Stress* that education for sustainable development is an opportunity and a responsibility that should engage both developed and developing countries in intensifying efforts for poverty eradication, reduction of inequalities, environmental protection and economic growth, with a view to promoting equitable, more sustainable economies and societies benefiting all countries, especially those most vulnerable such as small island developing States and least developed countries,

10. *Underscore* that the implementation of education for sustainable development should fully take into consideration local, national, regional and global contexts, as well as the contribution of culture to sustainable development and the need for respecting peace, non-violence, cultural diversity, local and traditional knowledge and indigenous wisdom and practices, and universal principles such as human rights, gender equality, democracy and social justice,

11. *Appreciate* the commitments to education for sustainable development expressed by all concerned stakeholders through their specific contributions to the launch commitments of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development,

12. *Commit* ourselves to building and maintaining the momentum of the launching of the Global Action Programme in its five priority action areas, namely policy support, whole-institution approaches, educators, youth and local communities, through inclusive quality education and lifelong learning via formal, non-formal and informal settings,

13. *Call upon* all concerned stakeholders, including Governments and their affiliated institutions and networks, civil society organizations and groups, the private sector, media, the academic and research community and education and training institutions and centres as well as United Nations entities, bilateral and

multilateral development agencies and other types of intergovernmental organizations at all levels, to: (a) set specific goals, (b) develop, support and implement activities, (c) create platforms for sharing experiences (including information and communication technology-based platforms) and (d) strengthen monitoring and evaluation approaches in the five priority action areas of the Global Action Programme in a synergistic manner,

14. *Urge* all concerned stakeholders, in particular ministries of education and all ministries involved with education for sustainable development, higher education institutions and the scientific and other knowledge communities to engage in collaborative and transformative knowledge production, dissemination and utilization, and promotion of innovation across sectoral and disciplinary boundaries at the interface of science, policy and education for sustainable development practice to enrich decision-making and capacity-building for sustainable development, with emphasis on involving and respecting youth as key stakeholders,

15. *Invite* Governments of UNESCO member States to make further efforts to:

(a) Review the purposes and values that underpin education, assess the extent to which education policy and curricula are achieving the goals of education for sustainable development; reinforce the integration of education for sustainable development into education, training, and sustainable development policies, with a special attention paid to system-wide and holistic approaches and multi-stakeholder cooperation and partnerships between actors of the education sector, private sector, civil society and those working in the various areas of sustainable development; and ensure the education, training and professional development of teachers and other educators to successfully integrate education for sustainable development into teaching and learning;

(b) Allocate and mobilize substantial resources to translate policies into actions, especially building necessary institutional capacities for both formal and non-formal education and learning at national and subnational levels along the five priority actions areas of the Global Action Programme;

(c) Reflect and strengthen education for sustainable development in the post-2015 agenda and its follow-up processes, ensuring, first, that education for sustainable development is maintained as a target in the education goal and also integrated in sustainable development goals as a cross-cutting theme; and, second, that the outcomes of the 2014 World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development are taken into consideration at the World Education Forum 2015 to be held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 19 to 22 May 2015,

16. *Request* the Director-General of UNESCO to continue to:

(a) Provide global leadership, support policy synergy and facilitate communication for education for sustainable development, in cooperation with Governments, other United Nations entities, development partners, private sector and civil society, within the framework of the UNESCO road map to implement the Global Action Programme;

(b) Harness partnerships and mobilize networks, including the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, UNESCO Network of Chairs, centres under the auspices of UNESCO, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites, as well as UNESCO clubs and associations;

(c) Advocate the importance of ensuring adequate resources, including funding, for education for sustainable development.